

CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY

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COUNTRY China

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SUBJECT Possible Airlift of Supplies to Chinese Communists
by Soviets

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1. During the winter months of 1949, Soviet planes are reported to have made regular night flights between Dairen and Tsinan, presumably to bring war materiel for the Chinese Communists' winter offensive. Two circumstances lend credence to these reports:

- American pilots, flying over Tsinan on their regular Tsingtao-Taiyuan shuttle, observed that every morning after a snowfall the Tsinan runway was cleared of snow. Since there were no Chinese Communist planes in the area then, it was assumed that the runway had been cleared to receive planes from Dairen.
- When the U.S. Marines were still operating their radar at Tsingtao, they reported "blips" of unidentified aircraft flying nightly about 20 miles from Tsingtao, behind the east mountains. When challenged over Very High Frequency (VHF), the planes' pilots were reported to have replied in perfect English that they were Civil Air Transport (CAT) planes, but a check with CAT operations would always establish the fact that CAT had no planes in that area at that time*.

2. One circumstance supporting the theory that supplies were being flown in from Dairen was that the Chinese Communists had thrown an astonishing amount of anti-aircraft fire at civil airlines planes during the 1949 winter battles as compared with any other time in the past two years. It is believed that, if the Chinese Communists had possessed these weapons in quantity one or two years ago, the weapons would have been directed against civil planes then.

3. The first anti-aircraft fire was reported outside of Chinchou (121-67, 41-07) less than a year ago, and it has been steadily increasing. This fire is described as coming from two types of Japanese anti-aircraft guns. Most of the reports said "It acted like 'ack-ack', but the bursts were yellow," which prompted the theory that the Communists were using 40 mm Japanese anti-personnel shells.

4. As there have been no reports of Russian equipment being used, but only of

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Japanese and U.S. equipment, it is believed that the Russians have been manufacturing large quantities of new arms with Japanese stampings on them. It is believed that these arms are manufactured in captured Japanese arsenals in North Korea and Manchuria, then shipped to Chefoo (121-24, 37-32) and Chihutao (120-14, 37-40) on surface craft (from there sent by truck convoy to the rail center at Tsinan or sent by boat up the Yellow River), or sent by airplane from Dairen to Tsinan**.

5. Demands on Communist supplies during the Pengpu-Hsuchou battles were apparently great enough to give rise to the theory that the Communists must have had fresh arms airlifted as far as Tsinan, then transferred to trains and rushed to the front lines.
6. There is no evidence that these flights are continuing. Probably they have ended because the rail line from Manchuria down is now completely in Communist hands.

25X1A * ~~SECRET~~ Comment. Why Russian planes were "picked up" by radar only 20 miles from Tsingtao, off their direct route, is a question that has never been answered satisfactorily. There have been other reports of Marine radar picking up unidentified aircraft on the direct Dairen-Tsinan route, but these should be challenged because, with the unfavorable terrain around Tsingtao, it is doubtful if Early Warning (E/W) radar could pick up a "blip" that far away. No one has actually seen a Russian plane flying this route.

25X1A * ~~SECRET~~ Comment. At that time the direct rail lines from Manchuria to the front lines were not all in Communist hands, so the Russians would have been forced to send their supplies via Dairen and Port Arthur.

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